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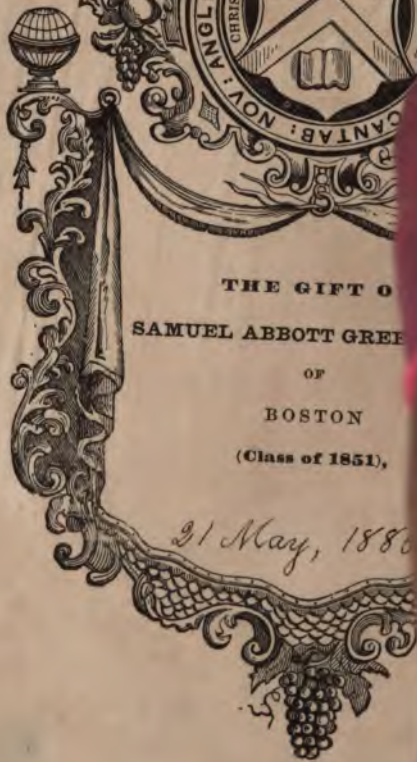
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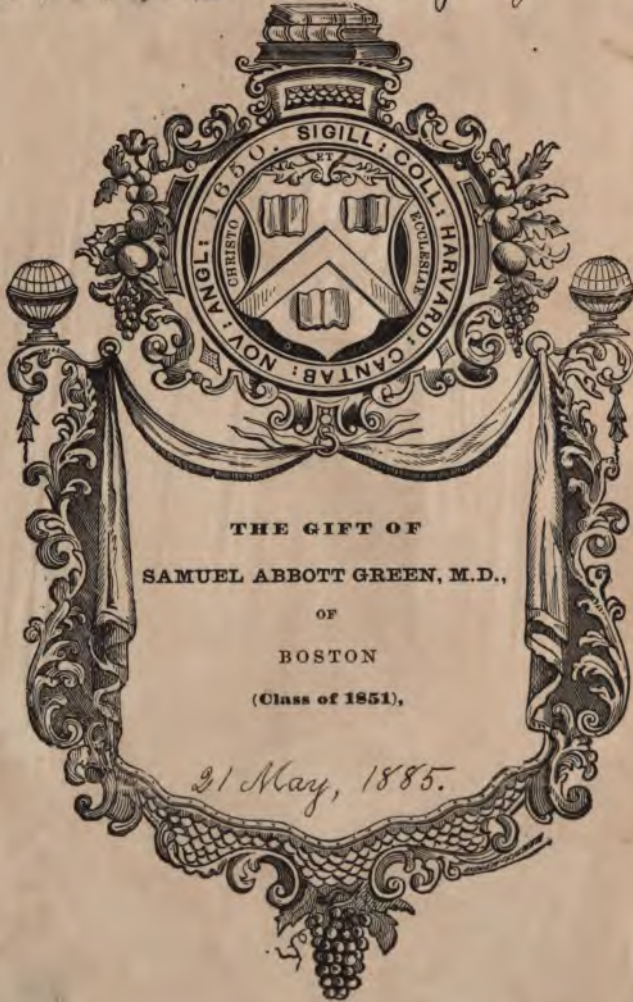
THE GIFT OF  
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OF  
BOSTON  
(Class of 1851),

31 May, 1886



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Bd. July, 1885.



THE GIFT OF  
SAMUEL ABBOTT GREEN, M.D.,  
OF  
BOSTON  
(Class of 1851),

21 May, 1885.

A PLAN

FOR

STEREOTYPING CATALOGUES

BY

SEPARATE TITLES,

AND FOR FORMING A

GENERAL STEREOTYPED CATALOGUE

OF

PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE UNITED STATES.

BY CHARLES C. JEWETT,

ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND LIBRARIAN OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

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FROM THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, FOR AUGUST, 1850.

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WASHINGTON:

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M. D. CCC. LI.

~~IV, 1882~~  
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A PLAN

FOR STEREOTYPING CATALOGUES

BY SEPARATE TITLES.

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Everything which facilitates research promotes the progress of science. Every thorough student knows from experience the value of full, accurate, and convenient catalogues and indexes. It is on these accounts that I venture to invite attention to a project, which offers to every growing library the means of issuing, at a comparatively small expense, complete annual or biennial catalogues of its treasures; and which will enable a central establishment, like the Smithsonian Institution, to publish, at stated intervals, general catalogues of all the libraries in the country.

It may not be amiss, at the outset, to glance at the nature and extent of the difficulties, which have hitherto been encountered in attempting to meet the wants of scholars in respect to printed catalogues; and which have led, or are leading, to a common abandonment of the hope of affording such desirable guides to the literary accumulations of the larger libraries of Europe.

It is, of course, entirely practicable to publish a complete and satisfactory catalogue of a library which is stationary. But most public libraries are constantly and rapidly increasing. This circumstance, so gratifying on every other account, is the cause of the difficulties to which I have alluded.

While the catalogue of such a collection is passing through the press, new books are received, the titles of which it is impossible, in the ordinary manner of printing, to incorporate with the body of the work.

Recourse must be had to a supplement. In no other way can the acquisitions of the library be made known to the public. Ere long, perhaps, as in the Library of Congress, the number of supplements may be increased to nine. The student may thus be obliged to grope his weary way through ten catalogues, instead of one, in order to ascertain whether any book which he seeks is, or is not, in the library. He cannot be certain, even then, that the book is not in the collection, for it may have been received since the last appendix was printed.

Supplements soon become intolerable. The whole catalogue must then be re-arranged and reprinted. The expense of this process may be borne, while the library is small; but it soon becomes burdensome, and ere long insupportable, even to national establishments.

There is but one course left,—not to print at all. To this no scholar consents, except from necessity.

But to this alternative, grievous as it is, nearly all the large libraries of Europe have been reluctantly driven. More than a century has passed since the printing of the catalogue of the Royal Library at Paris was commenced. It is not yet finished. No one feels in it the interest which he would, if he could hope to have it kept up complete, when once it were brought up to a given date.

Dr. Pertz, chief librarian of the Royal Library of Berlin, declares that to print the catalogue of a large library, which is constantly increasing, is to throw away money. His opinion is founded upon the supposed impossibility of keeping up the catalogue so as continually to represent the actual possessions of the library.

The first volume of the new catalogue of printed books in the British Museum was published in 1840. It is a folio of 457 pages, and contains the letter A, complete to the end of the year 1838. The letter B has not yet appeared. Mr. Panizzi, from the first, strongly opposed the printing of any part of the catalogue till the whole, up to the prescribed limit (1838), should be completed in manuscript. Time has shown the justness of his views. The Commissioners, lately appointed by the Queen to inquire into the constitution and management of the Museum, have, in their report, expressed an opinion decidedly against the printing of the catalogue at all, and principally on the ground that it must ever remain imperfect.

One of the witnesses (the Rt. Hon. J. W. Croker), examined before the Commissioners, thus strongly states the case with respect to printing:

“ You receive, I suppose, into your Library every year, some 20,000 volumes, or something like that. Why, if you had a printed catalogue



dropped down from heaven to you at this moment perfect, this day twelvemonth your 20,000 interlineations would spoil the simplicity of that catalogue; again the next year 20,000 more; and the next year 20,000 more; so that at the end of four or five years, you would have your catalogue just in the condition that your new catalogue is now (the manuscript part greater than the printed part.) With that new catalogue before your eyes, I am astonished there should be any discussion about it, for there is the experiment; the experiment has been made, and failed."

Not one European library of the first class has a complete printed catalogue in one work. The Bodleian Library issued, in 1843, a catalogue in three large volumes folio, which is generally, but erroneously, supposed to contain the titles of all the books in the collection. But all books of which special catalogues had previously been published are omitted in it. For a complete catalogue of the Bodleian Library, it is necessary to procure, not only the 3 vols. folio, 1843, but also—

1. "Books relating to British Topography, &c., bequeathed to the Bodleian Library, by Rich. Gough, Esq., 4to., Oxford, 1814."

2. "Bibliotheca celeberrima Hebræa quam collegit Dav. Oppenheimerus, 8vo. Hamburgi, 1820 [in Bibl. Bodl. illata a. 1829]."

3. "Dissertationes Academicæ quibus nuper aucta est Bibl. Bodl. fol. Oxon. 1834."

4. "Printed Books and Manuscripts bequeathed by Francis Douce, Esq., to the Bodleian Library, fol., Oxford, 1840."

Therefore, one may be obliged to search five catalogues before he can ascertain whether any particular book were in that library at the end of the year 1834.

The catalogue of 1843 is only brought down to 1835. None, therefore, of the literature of the last fifteen years, and none of the acquisitions of the library during that period, are contained in it.

A supplement is now in press, which contains the additions to the library from 1835 to 1847. When this is published, it will be possible, *by consulting six catalogues*, to ascertain whether any given book was, or was not, in the library at the close of the year 1847!

In view of these facts, it is not surprising that the Commissioners on the British Museum should come to the opinion that it is unwise to print the catalogue of that library, and should advise that nothing more be attempted than to prepare and keep up a manuscript catalogue.

But, in this opinion, the English public, who look to the end with-

considering the difficulties of the way, do not seem cordially to acquiesce; and it will perhaps be found necessary to print, even at the estimated cost of £40,000, and with the certainty that, almost as soon as the catalogue comes from the press, the republication of it will be as loudly demanded.

This is, surely, a disheartening state of things. It applies with equal force to catalogues of all forms, alphabetical, chronological, and classed. It has been felt and lamented by every one who has had the care of an increasing library.

In seeking a remedy for this evil, the idea occurred to me, several years ago, *to stereotype the titles separately*, and to preserve the plates, or blocks, in the alphabetical order of the titles; so as to be able readily to insert additional titles in their proper places, and then to reprint the whole catalogue. By these means, the chief cost of republication—that of composition—together with the trouble of revision and correction of the press, would, except for the new titles, be avoided. The great difficulty which had so long oppressed and discouraged the librarians of Europe, and involved the libraries in expenses so enormous, would thus be overcome.

This idea, which had occurred to me before my appointment as librarian of the Smithsonian Institution, assumed, in my mind, new importance in connection with the plan of forming a General Catalogue of American libraries.

My action in the matter was checked by the discouraging opinions of several stereotypers whom I consulted. I did not, indeed, believe the difficulties which they suggested, to be insuperable; but I was so situated, that it was impossible for me at once to institute the experiments necessary to show that they could be overcome.

In the mean time the Librarian [S. F. Haven, Esq.] and the Directors of the American Antiquarian Society having heard of the plan, opened a correspondence with me on the subject, with a view to employing it in the republication of their own catalogue. The energetic aid and ingenious suggestions of one of the directors, the Rev. E. E. Hale of Worcester, have since given a new impulse to the scheme, and have induced me to propose its adoption by the Smithsonian Institution, earlier than I had intended.\*

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\* It is proper for me to state, that, in the autumn of 1847, I communicated my plans to Mr. Henry Stevens, and requested him, during his proposed visit to England, to make them known to gentlemen connected with the Library of the British Museum. In February, 1849, William Desborough Cooley, Esq., in his evidence

The suggestions of Mr. Hale, seconded by the practical skill of an ingenious electrotypist, (Mr. Wilcox, of Boston,) first established the practicability of stereotyping, or electrotyping, a catalogue in separate, movable titles.

I am able to offer for your examination two specimen pages, with the aid of which I can readily explain the several methods by which titles may be thus stereotyped. The first of these is the electrotype plate, made at the suggestion of the Rev. Mr. Hale. It is a beautiful piece of work, and it demonstrates to the conviction of the most incredulous the practicability of printing catalogues in this way.

By the ordinary electrotype process, a layer of copper, about 1-40th of an inch in thickness, is deposited upon a mould, taken from the type in wax. This plate is then mounted upon a plate of type metal, say 3-8ths of an inch thick, in order to stiffen it. The titles are next separated by means of a circular saw. For printing, these titles are mounted upon iron blocks of the size of the page.

This plan might be modified by soldering the pages of the electrotype plate upon a metallic block of the height of ordinary type, and then sawing apart the titles; or by preparing a common stereotype plate in the same way; or by casting the titles separate and of the height of type.

The other specimen page which I have to offer, is a first attempt to use for our purpose a new process of stereotyping, which promises to form an era in the art. A gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Josiah Warren, is

before the Museum Commission (first published in April, 1850,) proposed a plan for stereotyping titles, similar in some respects to my own. He made no mention of any other person as the originator. In the London Athenæum of May 11, 1850, this plan is attributed to Mr. Cooley, and is dwelt upon at considerable length and with great approbation. It has since been the subject of discussion in several English periodicals. Inasmuch as two persons may, and frequently do, independently of each other, invent or discover the same thing, I have nothing to say with respect to this claim, if it be such, on the part of Mr. Cooley, further than to state, as I have done, the facts and *dates* with reference to myself, as they are known to many gentlemen in this country, showing that I had taken measures to carry my scheme into operation several years before Mr. Cooley suggested in public a scheme in some degree similar, and that my plans were known at the British Museum several months before Mr. Cooley brought the matter forward.

I should be sorry to appear unduly anxious to establish any claim to priority of invention in this case. If the scheme be a good one, it matters little who originated it. My chief concern with reference to the matter is, that the scheme which I present should not be unfavorably judged on account of any impracticability in that brought forward in England.

the inventor. The material which he uses for stereotyping costs not more than three cents for an octavo page. The process is so simple, that any man of average ingenuity could learn to practise it successfully by two or three days' instruction. The cost of apparatus for carrying on the work is very small. The rapidity of execution is such, that one man could produce at least 25 octavo pages a day, all finished and ready for use. The plates give a beautiful impression. They seem as durable as common stereotpye plates; and, so far as is now known, they are not in any great degree more liable to injury.

If it bears the severe tests of practical men, this new process will have been brought forward at a most favorable period for our project; for it will be seen, by the specimen here presented, that it offers extraordinary facilities for the kind of work which we require, and it will very greatly reduce the expense.

This preliminary point,—of the practicability of stereotyping by titles,—being established, I beg leave to state the proposed *manner of employing* this method of stereotyping, in the printing of catalogues of particular libraries, and of a central catalogue of all the libraries in this country.

It is as follows :

1. The Smithsonian Institution to publish Rules for the preparation of catalogues.
2. To request other institutions intending to publish catalogues of their books, to prepare them according to these rules, with a view to their being stereotyped under the direction of the Smithsonian Institution.
3. The Smithsonian Institution to pay the whole *extra* expense of stereotyping, or such part thereof as may be agreed on.
4. The stereotyped titles to remain the property of the Smithsonian Institution.
5. Every Library uniting in this plan to have the right of using all the titles in the possession of the Smithsonian Institution, as often as desired for the printing of its own catalogue by the Institution; paying only the expense of making up the pages, of the press-work, and of distributing the titles to their proper places.
6. The Smithsonian Institution to publish, as soon as possible, and, at stated intervals, general catalogues of all libraries coming into this system.

It is believed that there is no insuperable difficulty in any part of this plan, provided that the benefits to be derived from it be such as to secure the coöperation of the various libraries in the country.

To these benefits it is necessary, therefore, to direct particular attention.

In the first place, let us consider its advantages in an economical point of view to the *first* institution adopting it.

We will suppose, for example, that the American Antiquarian Society proposes to publish a new catalogue of its library. This institution printed, in 1837, a handsome and valuable catalogue, in 562 large 8vo pages, in fine type. The composition and press-work cost, we may suppose, one dollar a page. This must all now be reprinted, in order to add, in their proper places, the titles of books received since 1837, the number of which is almost equal to that of the former catalogue. If a new catalogue be now printed, in ten or twelve years it will be necessary to reprint the whole, and this process will go on till the expense of reprinting will be quite appalling. Now, had the titles of the original catalogue been stereotyped, the catalogue, instead of costing, for the composition, 500 dollars, would have cost, for composition and stereotyping, 750 dollars, counting the extra cost of stereotyping in titles 50 per cent. above that of the composition;\* but the necessity of recomposing the first part would no longer exist. Five hundred dollars would therefore be saved in the first reprint, whilst the extra expense would be only 250 dollars. Thus the net gain would be 250 dollars, minus the cost of newly making up, and imposing the old matter, which would be very inconsiderable. But there would be still further gains. It would not be thought necessary to print so large editions, if the work could be reproduced at a trifling expense. The re-arrangement, too, passes from the hands of the librarian to those of the printer; and the proof-reading has already been done, once for all.

The chance for applying this system to the first edition is indeed lost; but the same reasoning, at the present moment, applies to the second. If the whole be now stereotyped, and 200 copies struck off, the accessions for the first year may be stereotyped and printed separately, and in the second or third year, a new catalogue be issued, with the additions incorporated. In the meantime, it is probable that many of the supplemental titles would have been stereotyped for other libraries, and, thus, the cost of writing them out and of stereotyping them, be spared to the Antiquarian Society. If the cost of composition for the catalogue about to be published (containing 30,000 titles

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\* I am unable to state what would be the exact cost of stereotyping or electrotyping by titles. I assume 50 per cent. extra, as a convenient rate for calculation, though, if Mr. Warren's plan succeeds, it can be done for much less.

or more) be stated at 1000 dollars, for an additional of 500 dollars the necessity of recomposing would be forever obviated, and the great advantage secured, of being able to print every two or three years, at small expense, new editions, each complete to the time of its publication.

It is thus, I think, demonstrable, that, even for the use of a single library, this plan would be economical.

Let us next consider the advantages which the second Library adopting the plan may hope from it, in an economical point of view.

We will suppose, for the sake of example, that after the Antiquarian Society's Catalogue has been stereotyped, and the titles are placed under the care of the Smithsonian Institution, it is proposed to issue a new edition of the Catalogue of the Library of Congress. What inducements would there be for adopting this plan?

It has been the practice in this library to print a new edition of the catalogue every ten years, and to issue annual supplements. About one-fifth of the Catalogue has been printed five times; two-fifths, four times, &c. Now, from what has already been said, it will be manifest how great the saving would have been, had this plan been known and followed from the first, even if the first cost of stereotyping by titles had been twice or three times that of ordinary printing; and consequently how great would be the prospective advantage of adopting the plan, even independently of any general system.

But I now suppose, that, when the plan is adopted for the Library of Congress, the catalogue of the Antiquarian Library has already been stereotyped, and that the titles are in possession of the Smithsonian Institution for the use of other libraries entering into this general arrangement. Here is a new and very important element in the calculation.

We suppose the number of titles of the Antiquarian Library, already stereotyped, to be 30,000. Some of these titles would doubtless be the same in both collections. For all that are common to the two, the expense of the *preparation* of titles, of *composition*, and *revision*, would be saved to the Library of Congress. It is impossible to say how much the saving would be from these sources, because these two catalogues are not uniform or complete.

If the Library of Congress were properly catalogued, it would give perhaps 70,000 titles. Of these I presume not less than 15,000 would be identical with the same number in the Antiquarian Library.

At this rate, more than one fifth of the labor and cost of preparation, and

of the cost of printing, would be saved by the use of titles prepared and stereotyped by others, over and above the savings already enumerated.

After the stereotyping of the Catalogue of the Antiquarian Library and the Library of Congress, we should have perhaps 85,000 stereotyped titles. Of course, the third institution adopting the plan would be likely to find a very large number of its titles identical with those already stereotyped. The amount saved by the use of titles already stereotyped would soon (perhaps in the third library) be sufficient to counterbalance the extra expenditure for stereotyping for that library. At any rate, the extra expense would be a quantity constantly and rapidly diminishing, and it would soon (certainly after the fourth or fifth large library) vanish entirely. The Smithsonian Institution would not, therefore, be required to assume the charge of an enterprise which might involve it in great and increasing expense, but rather, and solely, to help put in operation and to guide a system which will, almost immediately, pay its own way, and will soon save enormous sums of money to our public libraries.

That the *aggregate economy* of this plan would be very great, may be seen from the following statement :

There are, in the Smithsonian Library, 15,000 pages, mostly in 8vo, of catalogues of public libraries in the United States. These contain at least 450,000 titles. But according to the best estimate which I can make from a comparison of these catalogues, there are, among them not more than 150,000 *different* titles. Two thirds, then, of the whole cost of printing these catalogues the first time might have been saved, by assuming the extra expense of stereotyping the remaining third. Much more would, as is manifest from what has been said, be saved in the successive reprints.

I have put thus prominently forward the economy to be expected from the proposed enterprise, not because this, in my estimation, is the most powerful argument in favor of it; nor because I should entirely despair of its adoption were it not advantageous in a pecuniary point of view;—but because, even if there were no other reasons for it, (provided there were none against it,) the fact of its great economy would be decisive; and because in the present poverty of our institutions of learning, and in the vast number of plans for the extension of their usefulness which present themselves for consideration, and claim approval, this might stand a much smaller chance of success if it rested entirely upon other grounds than the saving of money.

Having now, however, shown its economy when employed by a single library, and its greater economy in connection with a general system, I proceed to suggest a few among the many benefits to the cause of knowledge, which the plan promises, if generally adopted.

It can hardly be necessary for me to dwell at length upon the benefits to be expected from a *general printed Catalogue* of all books in the public libraries of America. By means of it every student in America would have the means of knowing the full extent of his resources for investigation. The places where every book could be found, would be indicated in the Catalogue. A correspondence would be kept up between the Smithsonian Library and every other library in the country. A system of exchange and of general loans might, with certain stringent conditions, be established, so that all the literary treasures of the country would be measurably accessible to every scholar. When the loan of the book would be impossible, extracts might be copied, quotations verified, and researches made through the intervention of the Smithsonian Institution, which would, in many cases, be nearly as valuable to the student as the personal examination of the book.

In connection with this topic I would add:—By law a copy of every book for which a copyright shall be secured in this country is required to be delivered to the Smithsonian Institution, and to be preserved therein. It is hoped that additional legislation on this subject will, while it lightens the burdens of publishers, secure the observance of this law, with respect to our institution, *in all cases*. If, then, the books thus obtained be all preserved, they will constitute the complete printed documentary history of America during the existence of this law. It is useless to enlarge upon the value of such a collection.

If, now, a list of these books, as they come into the library, should month by month be published in the *Smithsonian Bulletin*, and the titles be immediately stereotyped, the expense would be trifling of publishing every year a catalogue of the books copyrighted in America during the year, and to print, every five years, a general catalogue of American publications up to that limit. Thus, by the monthly bulletins, the annual lists, and the quinquennial catalogues, chronological records of American literature would be kept.

Again, this general catalogue would enable purchasers of books for public libraries to consult judiciously for the wants of the country. So poor are we in the books which scholars need—so long, at best, must we remain in a condition of provincial dependence in literary matters—



that a responsibility to the whole country rests upon the man who selects the books for any public library.

Another important benefit of this system is, that it allows us to vary the form of the catalogue, at will, from the alphabetical to the classed, and to modify the classification as we please. The titles, separately stereotyped, may change their order at command. If, for example, it were required to print a separate list of all the books in the country on the subject of *meteorology*, it would be necessary merely to check off in the general catalogue the titles to be used, and to hand it to the printer to do the rest of the work.

Another great benefit of this system would be, that it would secure *uniformity* in catalogues. A good degree of uniformity would be absolutely indispensable to the success of the plan. Entire uniformity is not to be expected. Perfection is not an attribute of the works of man. But a much higher degree of uniformity might be expected to result from this system, than could otherwise be hoped for. The rules for cataloguing must be stringent, and should meet as far as possible all difficulties of detail. Nothing, so far as it can be avoided, should be left to the individual taste or judgment of the cataloguer. He should be a man of sufficient learning, accuracy, and fidelity to apply the rules. In cases of doubt, reference should be made to the central establishment—to which the whole work should be submitted, page by page, for examination and revision. Thus we should have all our catalogues formed substantially upon one plan. Now, even if the plan adopted were that of the worst of our catalogues, if all were on the same plan, this uniformity would render catalogues, thus made, far more useful than the present chaos of irregularities. But we hope that the best possible system may be adopted.

Another general consideration in favor of this plan is, that it looks towards the accomplishment of that cherished dream of scholars, a *universal catalogue*. If the system should be successful in this country, it may eventually be so in every country of Europe. When all shall have adopted and carried out the plan, each for itself, the aggregate of the general catalogues, thus formed—few in number—will embrace the whole body of literature extant, and from them, it will be no impossible task to digest and publish a universal bibliography. How much this would promote the progress of knowledge by showing more distinctly what has been attempted and accomplished, and what yet remains to be achieved, and by thus directing the outlay of intellect aright; how much, by rebuking the rashness

which rushes into authorship ignorant of what others have written, and adding to the mass of books without adding to the sum of knowledge; how much by giving confidence to the true and heroic student, who fears no labor so that it bring him to the commanding height at which he aims—the summit of learning in the branch to which he devotes himself; how much such a work would, in these and other ways, promote the great objects we have in view, is well deserving of the attention of every thoughtful mind.

In America, alone, can this system be put into immediate operation. In every large country in Europe the arrears in cataloguing, or the mass of titles accumulated, would render the first expenses of the enterprise quite startling. But here all things conspire in our favor. Our libraries are now small, and mostly repetitions one of another. But they are prosperous, and will rapidly increase. Their supporters are all desirous of having printed catalogues. A central administration is necessary. This can be accepted by the Smithsonian Institution, whose position is peculiarly favorable, and whose funds are consecrated to such purposes. The enterprise requires no great outlay of money, no gigantic effort. It may go noiselessly, but rapidly into operation. There is nothing to prevent its immediate usefulness.

I would state in conclusion, that the whole subject will soon be referred to a commission of librarians and literary men, for the advantage of their opinions and suggestions. The details for the formation and printing of the catalogue have been drawn out in full, and will be submitted to the judgment of that tribunal.







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